The Role of Middle Size Cities in Rural Point Development  
Case Study: Iranshahr City

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1. Introduction
Today strengthening middle-sized cities in the developing countries for the sake of developing surrounding areas and distributing services and facilities in rural areas has occupied a special place in urban planning. The purpose of strengthening and developing middle cities is to enhance the economy of rural areas and prevent the immigration of villagers to big cities, and to spread the benefits of economic growth in deprived areas. The current article sets out to ascertain to what extent Iranshahr as a middle-sized city has been successful in distributing the population, services, and facilities, in developing the surrounding rural areas, and in creating the sustainable development between Iranshahr and the rural areas in its sphere of influence.

2. Theoretical framework
Urban-rural interaction is one of the interest areas of the researchers such as Randinli and Lipton. Sociologists are also actively engaged in discovering the relationship between the city and the village. They deeply focus their attention on the changes occurring in rural areas. A great part of discussions in the literature takes into consideration the spatial distances between the city and the village. Admittedly, middle-size cities are the leading cause of activating urban network, attracting immigrants, and providing job opportunities accordingly. "Randynly as one of the positive-thinking experts emphasizes on the role of cities, especially the middle-size cities, in providing a range of services for the surrounding areas" (Lynch, 2005, p.18). Thus, the middle-sized cities have a great role in transiting and strengthening in development; this role then allows each city to have its own function in developing and using the capabilities of the regional urban network, in attracting immigrants who are heading to big cities, and in providing job opportunities and working conditions for employment.

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3. Methodology

The research methods used in this article are practical and descriptive-analytical. The data were gathered mostly through libraries. To assess the role of Iranshahr as a middle-sized city in developing the rural areas, a variety of models were used, including the residential development and data-flow analysis. In addition, statistical tests such as t-test and regression analysis were used to explore the role of Iranshahr from economic, social, cultural, and infrastructural perspectives.

4. Discussion

In order to determine the developmental level of the rural areas surrounding the city of Iranshahr, Morris Model was chosen. Due to the close proximity to the city, it has benefitted from the highest quality of the facilities to develop. The initial estimate of development in the villages of Iranshahr indicates the developed villages on the outskirts of the city have benefited from the most services. The villages of East Bampoor and Bazman were recognized as developing while the villages of West Bampoor, Daman, Abter were recognized as less developed and the village of Abraise was recognized as underdeveloped. The model results show that the development of Iranshahr has been imbalanced, because only one village out of several villages is developed while other villages do not benefit from sufficient services. To find the relations between Iranshahr and rural areas and to observe their degree of dependency, we have used the trade, educational, and health services trends in this research. The analysis of different trends of economic, administrative, educational and health show that Iranshahr has a considerable share in providing services to the villagers. Wholesale and retail markets, banks and financial institutions, various agencies, academic centers, and the specialized training facilities and community health centers have a major contribution to the provision of the services in the rural areas of the city; in fact, about 70 percent of the respondents have declared that they visit Iranshahr daily, weekly or monthly to get their services. Therefore, a strong trend was found between the rural areas and Iranshahr.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Middle-size cities have a positive role in regional development as part of the city system and the link between big cities and small rural areas, offering various functions such as service, commercial, industrial and cultural functions. According to the results, Iranshahr has not been successful in developing rural areas. It can be concluded that services and facilities are needed to develop rural areas and establish a balanced population. Furthermore, there should be an appropriate planning based on the needs of the rural areas.

1. Developing and equipping the city of Iranshahr through different types of services and facilities such as educational, medical, and cultural are highly
essential. When these conditions are fulfilled, Iranshahr can meet the needs of people and prevent immigrants from rural areas.

2. Preparing comprehensive regional program, developing and strengthening the residential areas through different kinds of services seems necessary. This feature helps greatly to distribute a balance between population and services at the city level.

3. Strengthening and equipping telecommunication networks along with the rural transporting system should be taken into consideration, because rural areas face a lot of limitations, including paved-roads, postal services, and the Internet.

**Key words**: Middle-sized city, Rural settlement, Development, Model, Questionnaire, Iranshahr.

**References (In Persian)**


**References (In English)**


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